



# Community Gardens of Tucson

## FAQ's on Guidelines and Policies Updates

### **Why has CGT prepared this new set of gardening guidelines and policies?**

It has been years since CGT last conducted a comprehensive review of its gardening guidelines and policies and has never consolidated them into a single source document. These changes are based on careful examination of CGT's historic practices and extensive discussion with our stakeholders and are critical to professionalizing the management and administration of our gardens and ensuring CGT's long-term growth and sustainability.

### **Why are you increasing the plot fees?**

CGT has not changed its plot fees for an entire decade (last adjusted in 2013), and – due to inflation and a dramatic increase in operational costs – it is essential that we keep pace with these increases so that we remain financially sound. The additional revenues generated by the plot fee increase of \$4.00/month will provide the resources necessary for CGT's equipment, water, supplies, transportation, and other infrastructure needs that are critical to successfully garden in the Sonoran Desert.

### **Why has CGT placed a limit on the total number of plots that a gardener can pay for and occupy?**

The total number of gardening plots available to our gardening community is limited and, in fact, we often have waiting lists for many of our gardens. Because we are committed to providing gardening opportunities to as many individuals as possible and creating a diverse and inclusive community, it is important that our program is structured to welcome as many new gardeners as possible. Put differently, gardeners holding multiple lots inhibit access of those plots to others which, in turn, hampers our efforts to build a broader network and expanded community of gardeners.

### **Why must I pay more for my plot when there are gardeners who pay less?**

CGT is committed to being as inclusive an organization as possible. One way we meet this commitment is by providing scholarships to gardeners who lack the financial means to join us, a strategy that is deeply aligned with our mission of building community. The new policies that govern CGT's Scholarship program impart more structure and more equitable terms that will better position CGT to help low-income gardeners get involved, without jeopardizing our operating budget.

### **What is the process for discontinuing gardening at CGT?**

Gardeners electing to discontinue gardening with CGT must notify us by email or in writing to terminate enrollment. When leaving CGT, gardeners are required to vacate their plot, weeded, cleaned, and ready for occupancy by the next gardener. Gardeners unable to tend their plot due to illness or other personal circumstances must notify the Site Coordinator and arrange for someone else to tend their plot during their absence. Plots are deemed "abandoned" due to unpaid fees, inactive gardening, or lack of communication with the Site Coordinator. Unless remedied within 30 days, such plots will be reassigned, and the gardener notified by letter or email that their occupancy has been terminated without a refund.

### **I can't afford the price increase for my plot fee – are there any other payment options?**

CGT is fully committed to being as inclusive an organization as possible and, for that reason, our plot fees are structured to be as affordable as possible to the many individuals and communities we serve. Although the current plot fee, which covers the cost of water, tools, and other operational expenses, is \$22/month, we also provide plot fee assistance at reduced rates of \$16 and \$10/month. In addition, CGT offers a limited amount of full scholarships, which cover all of a gardener's expenses and allow them to

garden at no cost. Individuals can apply for up to two plots using our plot fee assistance. Scholarships are limited and variable, depending on available funding. Applications are competitive and applying is no guarantee of being offered a scholarship.

**I donate to CGT as well, so how are these funds being used?**

CGT has a very small annual operating budget that is approved each December by the Board of Directors. Although we raise funds to support our programs and operations in a variety of ways, one of the largest – and most reliable – sources of income is the plot fees paid by our gardeners. Importantly, plot fees only partially cover the costs of running CGT, which include, but are not limited to:

- Water
- Gardening tools, equipment, compost, fencing, mulch and other supplies
- Salaries for Contractors
- Insurance and accounting services
- Transportation
- Information technology (website, e-mail, Zoom, telephone, etc.)
- Office supplies